

RANDY L. KLUENDER, DDS, MS, is president and chairman of the board of trustees at the Georgia School of Orthodontics in Atlanta, where he serves as onsite liaison and provides support to orthodontic residents and faculty. Kluender has played a key role in the development and success of the school since before its inception in 2016. He can be reached at rkluender@gaorthodontics.org. The author has no commercial conflicts of interest to disclose.



COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY TREATMENT

THE FOLLOWING APPROACH WILL HELP ENSURE BETTER OUTCOMES IN COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN DENTAL AND ORTHODONTIC PROVIDERS — AND, BY EXTENSION, WHEN COLLABORATING WITH THE EXTENDED HEALTHCARE TEAM

By Randy L. Kluender, DDS, MS

Collaboration between dental and orthodontic teams is key to ensuring effective, successful outcomes for our patients. And the avenues through which these teams can collaborate increase with every technological advancement. Adopting a collaborative leadership approach in multidisciplinary care will help ensure effective communication and optimal treatment. By extension, this proactive

model lends itself to the management of complex cases involving providers across the patient's extended healthcare team.

Using the example of collaboration between dentists and orthodontists, the sharing of radiographic imaging not only reduces a patient's exposure to ionizing radiation, it also enables digitized imaging to be scanned and electronically shared between providers securely and in compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act regulations that protect patient privacy.

When 5G technology becomes readily accessible, this team-oriented approach to patient care will take an even larger step forward.

THIS PROACTIVE MODEL LENDS ITSELF TO THE MANAGEMENT OF COMPLEX CASES

It will provide a dramatic increase of bandwidth and speed, enabling complex diagnostic models to be electronically shared which, in turn, will expedite diagnosis and the development of individualized treatment plans.

This patient-focused team approach among orthodontists, dentists and periodontists is not a new dynamic. Referrals come from working together and are often the bloodline of a successful, sustainable practice. Another form of collaboration, continuing education courses offered to referring dentists, is an effective way to build referrals.

ROLE OF TELEHEALTH

With telehealth processes quickly advancing — spurred on by the COVID-19 pandemic — oral health professionals will inevitably increase collaboration with other healthcare providers and play a more integral role in the assessment and treatment of a patient's overall health.

Patients in need of cleft palate treatment are a case in point. These patients require ongoing collaborative, multidisciplinary care. An orthodontist is a key partner in the cleft palate team, which often includes a pediatrician, reconstructive surgeon, speech therapist, dentist, pediatric dentist or prosthodontist, and psychologist. Ongoing communication among the patient's healthcare team drives collaborative options that take into consideration factors such as the specific timing and sequencing of various treatments.

COLLABORATIVE MODEL

Collaborative leadership is a growing topic in dental education and an increasing presence in dental and dental hygiene curricula. For example, collaborative oral healthcare is one of the pillars on which the Georgia School of Orthodontics was established. Our residency program brings together leaders in dentistry, orthodontics, craniofacial orthopedics, business, research and academia, providing graduates with a comprehensive foundation to provide collaborative care that supports successful outcomes. Along with practical study, we

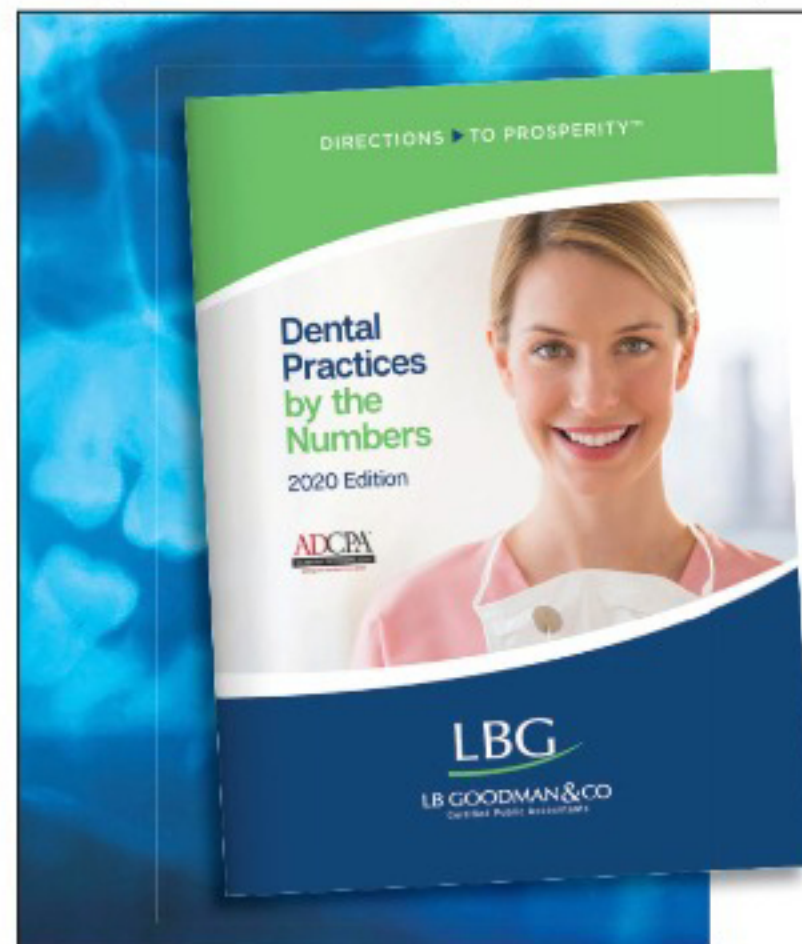
work to instill the value of each discipline and the enormous benefits that come from continuous collaboration.

Excellence in patient-centered care is the goal of all practitioners. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, innovative solutions for adopting a

THERE IS NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW TO CULTIVATE A COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFICIENT TEAM APPROACH TO CARE

team approach to treatment have been, and continue to be, developed. This model of care enables dentists, orthodontists, periodontists, prosthodontists, oral surgeons and, in some cases, other practitioners to join forces and build our industry into one that is not a by-product of healthcare, but, rather, a benchmark of an integrated approach to the patient's overall health and well-being.

Practitioners and educators alike must be driven to identify and utilize these new ways to boost our collaborative efforts as we strive to better serve our patients. There is no better time than now to cultivate a comprehensive and efficient team approach to care. ■



Think of it as a financial x-ray.

Download your FREE copy today at LBG.cpa

How healthy are your financials? You can't always trust what's on the surface. Our 2020 Edition of *Dental Practices by the Numbers* is a comprehensive report that helps you compare your financials to peer practices and exposes any practice inefficiencies.

LBG
LB GOODMAN & CO
Certified Public Accountants
DIRECTIONS ► TO PROSPERITY®

Circle 3 on card